

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method of transmitting a command in a gaming network, the method comprising:

generating a command originating at a master server or a slave server;

digitally signing the command by performing a hashing function over at least a portion of a message that includes the command to produce a message digest and passing the message digest through a digital signature algorithm to produce a digitally signed command including a current session key ~~that is changeable and~~ from a series of session keys, the current session key being associated with a current session index so that a first receiving node can determine the session key used, an updated session index being periodically ~~transmitted~~ broadcast over the gaming network to a plurality of receiving nodes including the first receiving node, the first receiving node periodically comparing the current session index to the updated session index, and the first receiving node requesting an updated session key when the current session index does not match the updated session index, at least two of the plurality of receiving nodes using the same series of session keys;

transmitting the digitally signed command from a transmitting node at the master server or slave server to ~~[[a]]~~ the first receiving node for verification wherein the digitally signed command from the transmitting node is subjected to the hashing function to produce a message digest, the message digest is passed through the digital signature algorithm to produce a digitally signed command at the first receiving node, and the digitally signed command at the first receiving node is compared to the digitally signed command from the transmitting mode to determine if there is a match; and

performing an action at the first receiving node in response to the command only if the digitally signed command at the first receiving node matches the digitally signed command from the transmitting node.

2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, the method comprising monitoring events on a gaming machine prior to generating the command.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein monitoring is performed by a master server and the first receiving node is a slave server.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein monitoring events is performed by a slave server and the first receiving node is a gaming machine.

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the event further comprises an event triggering a bonus to be paid.

6. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the command further comprises a bonus command.

7. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein transmitting the command comprises transmitting a first digitally signed bonus command to a slave server and transmitting a second digitally signed bonus command to a gaming machine.

8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the method comprises transmitting an unsigned message after the generation of the command and digitally signing the command at a slave server.

9. (Currently amended) A method of awarding a bonus in a gaming network, the method comprising:

generating a bonus command originating at a master server or slave server;

digitally signing the bonus command by performing a hashing function over at least a portion of a message that includes the bonus command to produce a message digest and then passing the message digest through a digital signature algorithm to produce a digitally signed bonus command including a current session key ~~which is changeable and~~ from a series of session keys, the current session key being associated with a current session index so that [[an]] a first electronic gaming machine can determine the session key used, an updated session index being periodically ~~transmitted~~ broadcast over the gaming network to a group of electronic gaming machines including the first electronic gaming machine, the first electronic gaming machine periodically comparing the current session index to the updated session index, and the first electronic gaming machine requesting an updated session key when the current session index does not match the updated session index, at least two of the electronic gaming machines using the same series of session keys;

transmitting the digitally signed bonus command from a transmitting node at the master server or slave server to [[an]] the first electronic gaming machine wherein the digitally signed

bonus command from the transmitting mode is subjected to the hashing function to produce a message digest, the message digest is passed through the digital signature algorithm to produce a digitally signed bonus command at the first electronic gaming machine, and the digitally signed bonus command at the first electronic gaming machine is compared to the digitally signed bonus command from the transmitting node to determine if they match; and

paying a bonus at the gaming machine in response to the bonus command only if the digitally signed bonus command at the first electronic gaming machine matches the digitally signed bonus command from the transmitting node.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9, the method comprising monitoring play at [[a]] the group of electronic gaming machines.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, the method comprising determining that one of the group of electronic gaming machines is to receive a bonus.

12. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein generating a bonus command is performed by a master server.

13. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein generating a bonus command is performed by a slave server.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 9, wherein transmitting the bonus command comprises transmitting a first digitally signed bonus command to a slave server and transmitting a second digitally signed bonus command to the first electronic gaming machine.

15. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the method comprises transmitting an unsigned message after the generation of the bonus command and digitally signing the bonus command at a slave server.

16. (Currently amended) A method of verifying a command in a gaming network, the method comprising:

receiving a command message with a digital signature at a first subservient device in a gaming network, the command message including a session key ~~that is changeable and~~ from a series of session keys, the current session key being associated with a current session index so

that the first subservient device can determine the session key used, an updated session index being periodically ~~transmitted~~ broadcast over the gaming network to a group of subservient devices including the first subservient device, the first subservient device periodically comparing the current session index to the updated session index, and the first subservient device requesting an updated session key when the current session index does not match the updated session index, at least two of the subservient devices using the same series of session keys;

verifying the digital signature at the first subservient device by subjecting the command message to a hashing function to produce a message digest, passing the message digest through a digital signature algorithm to produce a digital signature at the first subservient device, and comparing the digital signature at the first subservient device to the digital signature included with the command message to determine if there is a match; and

executing the command message at the first subservient device only if the digital signature at the first subservient device matches the digital signature included with the command message.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, receiving a command message with a digital signature at a first subservient device comprising receiving a command message with a digital signature at a slave server.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, receiving a command message with a digital signature at a first subservient device comprising receiving a command message with a digital signature at an electronic gaming machine.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16, executing the command at the first subservient device comprising generating a second command message, providing a digital signature to the second command message and transmitting the second command message with the digital signature.

20. (Original) The method of claim 16, executing the command comprising paying a bonus to a player at an electronic gaming machine.

21. (Currently amended) A method of verifying a bonus in a gaming network, the method comprising:

receiving a bonus message with a digital signature at a first subservient device in a gaming network, the bonus message including a session key ~~that is changeable and~~ from a series of session keys, the current session key being associated with a current session index so that the first subservient device can determine the session key, an updated session index being periodically ~~transmitted~~ broadcast over the gaming network to a group of subservient devices including the first subservient device, the first subservient device periodically comparing the current session index to the updated session index, and the first subservient device requesting an updated session key when the current session index does not match the updated session index, at least two of the subservient devices using the same series of session keys;

verifying the digital signature at the first subservient device by subjecting the bonus message to a hashing function to produce a message digest, passing the message digest through a digital signature algorithm to produce a digital signature at the first subservient device, and comparing the digital signature at the first subservient device to the digital signal included with the bonus message to determine if there is a match; and

paying a bonus specified in the bonus message at the first subservient device, if the digital signature at the first subservient device matches the digital signal included with the bonus message.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, the method comprising notifying a system administrator if the message does not verify.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, verifying the digital signature at the first subservient device comprising generating a command message, providing a digital signature to the command message and transmitting the command message with the digital signature.